

Shenwa language

Shenwa, also spelt **Chenoua** (native name: *Haqbayli t*), is a Zenati Berber language spoken on Mount Chenoua (Jebel Chenoua) in Algeria, just west of Algiers, and in the provinces of Tipaza (including the town of Cherchell) and Chlef. The speech of Jebel Chenoua proper is mutually comprehensible with that of the nearby Beni Menacer and Beni Haoua,^[3] and the two are thus treated as a single language.^[4] There are some 76,000 speakers.^[1]

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Phonology

Judging by Laoust (whose work on the language predates systematic phonology), Shenwa has the following sounds, which are given below in the International Phonetic Alphabet along with differing representations in the Algerian standard Latin orthography for Berber languages in angle brackets < >:

Consonants

Shenwa	
Chenoua	
<i>Haqbayli t</i>	
 <div>Map of the region around Algiers showing the location of Mount Chenoua and the distribution of various Berber dialects. The map includes labels for Oran, Tlemcen, Relizane, Mascara, Taret, Frenda, and Algiers. Specific dialects mentioned include Beni Menacer, Beni Haoua, and various Zenati dialects.</div>	
Native to	Algeria
Region	Mount Chenoua, Tipasa and Chlef districts
Native speakers	76,000 (2007) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Afro-Asiatic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berber<ul style="list-style-type: none">Northern<ul style="list-style-type: none">Zenati<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shenwa</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	cnu
Glottolog	chen1266 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/chen1266) ^[2]

	<u>Labial</u>	<u>Dental</u>		<u>Alveolar</u>		<u>Palato-alveolar</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Uvular</u>	<u>Pharyngeal</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
		<u>plain</u>	<u>pharyn.</u>	<u>plain</u>	<u>pharyn.</u>					
<u>Stop</u>	b	t d	tʰ <ṭ>				k g	q		
<u>Affricate</u>				ts <ṭ>		tʃ <č> dʒ <ğ>				
<u>Fricative</u>	f	θ <ṭ> ð <ḏ> ḏ <ḏ>	ðʰ <ḏ>	s z	sʰ <ṣ>	ʃ <c> ʒ <j>	x <ḵ>	χ <x> ʁ <y>	ħ <ḥ> ʕ <ε>	h
<u>Nasal</u>	m	n								
<u>Approximant</u>	w	l				j <y>				
<u>Trill</u>		r								

Comparison with other Berber languages suggests that Laoust's transcription may have failed to distinguish certain sounds, notably pharyngealized /zʰ/.

Vowels

/a/, /i/, /u/, /ə/ <e>. Laoust's <o> appears to variously indicate labialization (/ʷ/) or an allophone of /u/.

Grammar

Nouns

Masculine nouns start with *a-*, *i-*, *u-* (in the singular) – like all Berber languages – or more rarely with a consonant (often corresponding to *a-* in other languages.) Examples: *ayḏi* "dog"; *fus* "hand"; *iri* "neck"; *urṭu* "garden". Their plural is usually in *i...-en* (e.g. *ameṭin* "death" → *imeṭinen*), but a variety of other plural forms (e.g. *i...-an*, *i...-wen*, *i...awen*, *i...-en*, *i...-a-*), sometimes accompanied by internal ablaut, are also found: e.g. *ijiḏer* "eagle" → *ijuḏar*, *iṭri* "star" → *iṭran*, *afer* "wing" → *ifrawen*, *icer* "fingernail" → *icaren*.

Feminine nouns start with *h-* (originally *t-*), and usually end with *-t* or *-ṭ*: *hagmar ṭ* "mare", *hesa* "liver". A few feminine nouns have lost the *h-*: *malla* "turtledove". A masculine noun can be made diminutive by adding the feminine affixes: *afus* "hand" → *hafust* "little hand". The plurals of feminine nouns fall into much the same types as masculine ones, but adding *h-* at the beginning and using *-in* rather than *-en*: *hakṭemṭ* "female" → *hikṭemin*, *harract* "girl" → *harracin*, *huqi ṭ* "stone" → *huqay*, *hawleli ṭ* "spider" → *hiwlela*.

Genitive constructions – English "X of Y" or "Y's X" – are formed as "X Y", in which the prefix of Y changes to *u-* (masc.) or *n ṭe-* (fem.). Thus, for instance: *aman n ṭala* "the water of the fountain", *aglim uyilas* "the skin of the panther". *n* "of" is also used with foreign words: *hagmar ṭ n elqayḏ* "the mare of the Caid".

Adjectives

Adjectives agree in number and gender with the noun, and are formed in the same way: e.g. *amellal* "white", *azegrar* "long", *azaim* "good". The particle *d* is used before adjectives in certain contexts (including as a copula), in the same way as in the Kabyle language.

Numbers

As in Kabyle, only the first two numbers are Berber; for higher numbers, Arabic is used. They are *iğ* (f. *ict*) "one", *sen* (f. *sena t*) "two". The noun being counted follows it in the genitive: *sena t n țuwura* "two doors".

"First" and "last" are respectively *amezgaru* and *aneggaru* (regular adjectives). Other ordinals are formed with the prefix *wis* (f. *his*): *wis sen* "second (m.)", *his țela ța* "third (f.)", etc.

Pronouns

The basic personal pronouns of Shenwa are as follows. Gender is distinguished in all cases except the first person.

English	Standalone form	Possessive	Direct object	Indirect object	Object of preposition	Subject of preterite verb	Subject of aorist verb	Subject of imperative verb
I	<i>neč, nečințin</i>	<i>-inu</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-ay</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-egh</i>	<i>a-...-egh</i>	
you (m. sg.)	<i>cek, cekițin</i>	<i>-nnek</i>	<i>-c, -ic, -icek</i>	<i>-ak</i>	<i>-ek</i>	<i>h-...-d</i>	<i>ah-...-d</i>	<i>-</i>
you (f. sg.)	<i>cem, cemmițin</i>	<i>-nnem</i>	<i>-cem, icem</i>	<i>-am</i>	<i>-em</i>	<i>h-...-d</i>	<i>ah-...-d</i>	<i>-</i>
he	<i>neța, nețan</i>	<i>-nnes</i>	<i>-ț, -iț, -h</i>	<i>-as</i>	<i>-es</i>	<i>i-</i>	<i>ay-</i>	
she	<i>neța t</i>	<i>-ennes</i>	<i>-ț, -iț</i>	<i>-as</i>	<i>-es</i>	<i>h-</i>	<i>ah-</i>	
we	<i>necnin</i>	<i>-nnegh</i>	<i>-negh, -ghen</i>	<i>-anegh, -aghen</i>	<i>-negh</i>	<i>n-</i>	<i>ann-...(-t)</i>	
you (m. pl.)	<i>kennim</i>	<i>-nnwen</i>	<i>-kem, -ikem</i>	<i>-awen</i>	<i>-wen</i>	<i>h-...-m</i>	<i>ah-...-m</i>	<i>-t</i>
you (f. pl.)	<i>kennimț</i>	<i>-nnwenț</i>	<i>-kemț, -ikemț</i>	<i>-awenț</i>	<i>-wenț</i>	<i>h-...-mț</i>	<i>ah-...-mț</i>	<i>-mț</i>
they (m.)	<i>nahnin</i>	<i>-nsen</i>	<i>-țen, -ițen, -hen, -ihen</i>	<i>-asen</i>	<i>-sen</i>	<i>-n</i>	<i>a-...-n</i>	
they (f.)	<i>nahninț</i>	<i>-nsenț</i>	<i>-țenț, -ițenț, -henț, -ihenț</i>	<i>-asenț</i>	<i>-senț</i>	<i>-nț</i>	<i>a-...-nț</i>	

The basic demonstrative adjectives are *-a* "this" (also *-ay, -ađ; -ax* for middle distance), *-in* "that", *-enni* "the aforementioned". The demonstrative pronouns include:

- "this": *wa* m. sg., *hax* f. sg., *yida* m. pl., *hida* f. pl.
- "this" (emphatic): *wayek, hayek, idađik, hidađik*

- "this" (in question): *wenni*, *henni*, *iḍenni*, *hiḍenni*
- "that": *win*, *hin*, *yidin*, *hiḍin*

The standalone possessive pronouns ("mine", "yours", etc.) are formed by suffixing the possessive pronouns to "this" (except that *ha-* is used instead of *hax-*.) Similarly, the adjective "other" (invariable *enniḍen*) combines with "this" to make forms meaning "the other": *unniḍen*, *henniḍen*, *iḍenniḍen*, *hiḍenniḍin*.

The main interrogative pronouns are: *maṭa* "what?", *maṭ* "which", *manay* "who?", *mi lan* "whose?", *mikeḍ* "with whom?", *miḍeg* "in what?", *mizeg* "with what?", *mifeg* "on what?", *miyer* "at/for whom?"

The relative pronoun is *i* "which".

Indefinite pronouns include *yeḡ* (f. *yectent*) "one, someone", *cra* "something". Negative forms are made using the Arabic loanword *haṭa* (هت); *haṭa ḍ yeḡ* "no one", *haṭa ḍ elḥabb* "nothing".

Verbs

The declarative mood is divided into two tenses: preterite (past) and orist (non-past, formed by the addition of *a-*.) There is also an imperative mood. The irregular imperative *ia* "come" is used with the orist to form imperatives of the first person: *iaw annaroḥe t* "let's go". The pronoun affixes for these are given under Pronouns. The declarative mood is also accompanied by ablaut:

- Verbs whose imperative consists of two consonants or less (e.g. *eḡ* "eat", *eyr* "read", *ezr* "see", *eny* "kill") add *-a* to the stem in the 3rd person singulars and 1st person plural, and *-i* in all other forms: *enyiy* "I killed", *henya* "she killed".
- Verbs whose imperative begins with *a-* (e.g. *adef* "come in", *aḍer* "go down", *azen* "send") change it to *u-*: thus *uḍefen* "they came in", *huḍefed* "you (sg.) came in". (Verbs such as *af* "find" belong to both this and the previous group.) *awi* "bring" and *awḍ* "arrive" are exceptions, changing *a-* to *i-*: *yiwi* "he brought".
- Verbs with *-a-* in the middle (e.g. *laz* "be hungry", *nam* "have the habit of", *ḡal* "judge") change it to *-u-*: *elluzey* "I was hungry".
- Verbs with a final vowel usually behave like the two-consonant ones: *arji* "dream" → *ourjiy* "I dreamt", *yurja* "he dreamt"; *egmi* "teach" → *egmiy* "I taught", *igma* "he taught". But there are exceptions: *erni* "be born" → *irni* "he was born".

The participle is formed by adding *-n* to the 3rd person m. sg., sometimes with ablaut of final vowels: *inziz* "he sang" → *inzizen*; *ayenziz* "he will sing" → *ayenzizen*, *yu ṭa* "he hit" → *yu ṭin*.

The verb is negated by adding *u... c* around it: *u ṭinziz ec* "don't sing", *u huwireḍ ec* "you didn't walk". "Not yet" is *u r ṭuci eaḍ* or *ur uci*, where *r ṭuci* and *uci* are verbs conjugated in the appropriate person: *u r ṭuci yaḍ* *u d yuḍey ec* "I haven't arrived yet", *u her ṭuciḍ eaḍ* ... "you haven't yet..."

Derived verb forms include:

- a causative in *s-*: *azeg* "boil" → *sizeg* "make something boil".
- a "reciprocal" middle voice in *m-*: *zer* "see" → *mzer* "be seen"
- a passive voice in *ṭwa-*: *abba* "carry" → *ṭwabba* "be carried".
- Various habitual forms.

Continuous forms can be formed with *aql-* "see X" in the present tense, *ṭuya* "was" in the past tense: *aqlay ṭeṭey* "I am eating", *ṭuyay ṭeṭey* "I was eating".

Prepositions

Prepositions precede their objects: *i medden* "to the people", *sgi Bazar* "from Tipaza". Some of the main ones are: *i* "to" (dative), *n* "of", *deg/di/eg/i* "in(to)", *seg/zeg-/si* "from", *s* "using" (instrumental), *f/fell-* "on", *yer/γ* "towards", *akiḍ/d*, "with", *jar* "among", *za t* "in front of", *awr* "behind", *i sawen/susawen* "under", *addu* "over".

Conjunctions

Conjunctions precede the verb: *ami yiwoḍ* "when he arrived", *qabel ma ṭayen* "see if it's raining". Some important ones include: *melmi* "when?", *ami*, *yassa(l)*, *assya*, *yir* "when", *ma*, *kagella*, *lukan*, *willa* "if", *(an)ney* "or".

Sample text

Qaren midden: Unni ayḥaḡen ḍug ass, adefḥeyen arraw ennes ḍiferḍasen.

They say: he that tells stories in the daytime, his children will turn bald.

Ṭḥaḡen yir deg iḍ

They only tell stories at night.

Uccen akeḍ waḥzaw/The jackal and the child

Iḡ wuccen iroḥ iggur lami g ufa iḡ waḥzaw iṭellem i hezra. Innas uccen i warrac enni: "Maṭa helliḍ hegareḍ." Arrac enni innas: "Ṭellemey ḍi hezra." Innas uccen: "Aḍel ay hirkasin." Arrac enni iṭxiyeḍ as iḍaren nes. Lami iqaḍa innas: "Roḥ, aḍel iḍaren enneḵ yer fwi t."

Iroḥ uccen yaḍel iman es yer fwi t lami eqqoren iḍaren u iḡim ec ayuwr.

Ikk ed sin iḡ wumcic; innas uccen: "Sellek ay u c eṭṭyec." Iks as umcic hazra seg ḍarennes. Iroḥ uccen iwalla yer waḥzaw iḥ as elkul iye t ṭen.

A jackal went and met a child plaiting a rope. The jackal asked the child: "What are you doing?" This child replied: "I'm plaiting a rope." The jackal said: "Make me some shoes." This child tied up his feet. When he was done he told him: "Go show your feet in the sun."

The jackal went and showed his own feet in the sun, and his feet dried and he couldn't walk.

A cat arrived and the jackal told it: "Help me, I won't eat you." The cat took the rope off his feet. The jackal went back to the child, and ate all his goats.

References

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2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Western Algerian Berber" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/chen1266>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Laoust 1912:1

4. Salem Chaker, LE DIALECTE BERBERE DU CHENOUA (Algérie) (<http://www.centrederechercheberbere.fr/chenoua.html>), *Encyclopédie Berbère*, vol. XII, 1993 : p. 1902-1904.

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